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# The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES) 2005

## Summary Report





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## Summary Report

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)

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AADAC Research Services



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## Executive summary

In the fall of 2005, the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) undertook the second cycle<sup>1</sup> of The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES) to measure alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use and gambling activity among Alberta students in grades 7 through 12. The survey also examined student attitudes, perceptions, and social networks, in relation to substance use and gambling activity. In TAYES 2005, 3,915 students participated in the survey.

### Prevalence of substance use and gambling activity

- 36.6% of all students are non-drinkers; 63.4% had consumed alcohol in the last 12 months.
- Current drinkers (those who drank alcohol in the last 12 months, excluding sips) increase by grade.
- The proportion of students meeting AUDIT criteria for hazardous drinking increases by grade, with 5.9% of Grade 7 students, 14.1% of Grade 8 students, 23.3% of Grade 9 students, 34.1% of Grade 10 students, 37.8% of Grade 11 students, and 39.9% of Grade 12 students demonstrating risky drinking behaviour.
- Overall, 31.3% of all students report incidents of binge drinking, with minimal differences between gender groups.
- 86.5% of all students report not smoking cigarettes (including daily or occasional smoking) in the past 30 days.
- High school students (18.3%) are more likely to report past-30-day smoking than junior high school students (4.6%).
- Females demonstrated earlier smoking initiation than males.
- 24.8% of all students report that one or more people smoke inside their home every day or almost every day.
- Student exposure to second-hand smoke in vehicles varies by grade, with 25.9% to 31.5% of students in grades 7 through 10 and 42.2% of students in grades 11 through 12 report riding in a car during the past seven days with someone who was smoking cigarettes.
- 73.3% of all students did not use cannabis in the last 12 months.
- More high school students (34.5%) than junior high school students (12.1%) used cannabis in the last year.
- Both lifetime and past-year use of cannabis increases with age.
- 28.8% of all students report using illicit drugs (excluding cannabis) in their lifetime.
- 25.4% of students report past-year use of illicit drugs.

<sup>1</sup> The TAYES 2005 results must be interpreted with caution, due to limitations in sampling across Alberta. AADAC was unable to attain approval to survey Calgary students and secured access to only a limited group of Edmonton high school students. As a result, the findings may not sufficiently represent Alberta students, overall, and comparisons to the 2002 TAYES findings must be made with caution.



- More females (31.7%) report ever using illicit drugs than males (25.5%). Females (28.7%) also report higher past-year illicit drug use than males (21.8%).
- The most commonly used illicit drugs are hallucinogens (including mescaline and psilocybin or magic mushrooms, but excluding LSD or PCP). 9.1% of students report using hallucinogens in the past year, whereas 9.9% report using in their lifetime.
- 1.1% of students report using crystal meth in the last 12 months and 1.4% report using it in their lifetime.
- 37.4% of all students did not participate in gambling activities in the last 12 months.
- In the last year, males (68.6%) were more likely to report that they gambled than females (57.5%).
- The most popular gambling activity is playing cards for money (41.3%, overall), with 47.7% of high school students and 29.5% of junior high students reporting participation in this activity in the last 12 months.
- Overall, 2.4% of students present signs of gambling abuse (hazardous or problem gambling), according to SOGS-RA criteria.

### Attitudes, perceptions, and social networks

- With the exception of alcohol, most high school students perceive substance use among their peers to be higher than actual reported use.
- Current users are more likely than non-users to perceive access to alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis to be easy or very easy.
- Overall, students report that it is easier to obtain substances from members of their social network who use those substances than from members who do not use substances.
- Students find it easier to obtain substances from their two closest friends rather than their parents, regardless of member use status, with the exception of alcohol.
- Overall, most students (87.3%) report that their parents know where they are after school most of the time or always.
- Of all substance users, current drinkers report the highest levels of parental supervision, with 82.2% reporting that their parents know where they are after school most of the time or always and 73.8% reporting that when they go out at night their parents know who they are with most of the time or always.
- Over half (59.2%) of students report that when they go out on weekend nights, they have to be home by a set time most of the time or always.



- Overall, 3.9% of students perceive their academic performance to be below average, 62.9% consider their performance to be average, and 33.2% perceive their performance to be above average.
- Of students in all user and non-user groups, more non-drinkers (37.9%) consider their academic performance to be above average.
- Of all students, 27.7% like school very much or quite a lot, 50.9% like school to some degree, and 21.4% do not like school very much or not at all.
- School enjoyment is highest among current non-drinkers, with 37.8% stating that they like school very much or quite a lot.
- Overall, students in all user groups showed higher levels of disengagement than students in non-user groups.
- Overall, more students attended outdoor parties (44.2%) than raves (18.6%) in the past year.
- Current substance users were more likely to attend raves and outdoor parties than non-users.

## Introduction

The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC), an agency of the Government of Alberta, is mandated by the *Alcohol and Drug Abuse Act* to provide programming and services that address alcohol, tobacco, other drug, and gambling problems. A major aspect of AADAC's directive is to conduct research related to substance use and gambling behaviour (AADAC, 2002). AADAC performs ongoing research in order to effectively develop and evaluate policies and programs, and to monitor emerging population trends (AADAC, 2006).

Research informs the operation of AADAC's core businesses: information, prevention, and treatment. Research programs enhance all areas of AADAC's core business operations by disseminating research findings to Albertans and other stakeholders, informing the development of prevention programs, and measuring current population trends to augment the operation of treatment programs (AADAC, 2002).

Adolescent substance use and gambling activity represent an essential area of AADAC's programming and services. Evidence-based research in this area is needed to improve specialized prevention and treatment programs, and to indicate future programming needs. Since adolescence is a primary period of initiation and escalation of substance use and gambling behaviour, current and accurate information is needed to formulate effective policies and practices that take into account the unique characteristics of the youth population (AADAC, 2005).

In 2002, AADAC initiated The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES) to measure youth substance use and gambling behaviour and associated risk and protective factors. The purpose of TAYES 2002 was to provide a benchmark of current, relevant Alberta information (AADAC, 2003). The results of TAYES 2002 were reported in technical and summary reports and an additional series of brief reports focusing on specific areas of substance use and risk and protective factors.

AADAC commenced the second cycle of TAYES in 2005, working in partnership with the University of Alberta's Addiction and Mental Health Research Laboratory, and surveyed 3,915 Alberta students in grades 7 through 12. The 2002 survey instrument was updated to provide enhanced information on substance use and gambling behaviour and additional questions were added to evaluate adolescent attitudes, perceptions, and social networks.



## Survey approach

TAYES 2005 maintains the vision set forth in TAYES 2002: “seeing adolescents as they are; anticipating the adults they may become” (AADAC, 2003). The purpose of TAYES 2005 is twofold: first, to collect prevalence information and outline the context in which substance use and gambling activities do and do not occur, and second, to develop, with TAYES 2002, trend information to better understand ongoing substance use and gambling patterns.

Since adolescent gamblers and users of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs are an elusive population, it is difficult to measure prevalence accurately (NIDA, 2003). Furthermore, patterns of substance use and gambling activity change rapidly (Johnston, O’Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2005), thereby increasing the necessity for frequent and comprehensive study. To sufficiently capture prevalence information, survey instruments and methodology require constant monitoring and revision as required, accompanied by frequent and regular data collection.

For trend analysis purposes, TAYES 2005 is similar to TAYES 2002, but improvements in the sampling method and questionnaire design were made to more accurately capture population characteristics, allowing for more detailed and precise results.

TAYES 2005 sought to answer the following questions:

- What proportion of Alberta students in grades 7 through 12 use alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs and participate in gambling activities?
- How often do Alberta adolescents use alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs and participate in gambling activities?
- What is the prevalence of harmful use of substances and gambling?
- Are there patterns of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use and gambling behaviour associated with gender, region, and grade?
- Do users’ and non-users’ perceptions about substance use, themselves, and their environment differ?
- Do users and non-users differ in school connectedness, parental supervision, and choice of social activities?

## Methodology

The population of the 2005 cycle of TAYES consisted of students in grades 7 through 12 in public, Catholic, and charter school systems throughout Alberta. To accurately measure substance use, gambling behaviour, and their related contextual factors, two survey instruments were developed for the purpose of data collection. TAYES Module A, a questionnaire consisting of 201 items, was given to students in grades 7 through 9. Module B, similar to Module A but with an additional 57 items, was administered to students in grades 10 through 12. Survey items were developed based on questions from TAYES 2002, other provincial student drug use surveys, and national youth surveys. The questionnaires were pre-tested by a small sample of youth respondents enrolled in an AADAC Youth Services program.

Project administration protocols were designed to ensure the appropriate acquisition of consent, the guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity, and accurate sampling. The sample design was a single-stage stratified cluster sample design with selection proportional to school size. The survey required active parental consent, wherein students with signed parental consent forms participated in the survey and were given the opportunity to decline participation, even with parental consent. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured by placing and storing parental consent forms and completed surveys in separate sealed envelopes. After the survey instrument and design were finalized, the data collection protocol was approved by the joint Health Research Ethics Board of the University of Alberta and Capital Health.

After final ethical authorization was obtained, the sampling process began. Alberta was first divided into five regions, from which school divisions were later chosen. From all public, Catholic, and charter school systems in Alberta, 27 school divisions were selected to participate in the survey, with 12 agreeing to partake in the survey. Thirty-two schools were selected from within the 12 school divisions, and 19 agreed to participate in the survey.

After the list of participating schools was finalized, consent letters were sent to parents of all eligible students. From October 2005 to March 2006, the surveys were administered at participating schools across Alberta. Students who obtained parental consent completed the self-administered paper survey; others completed a mock survey asking questions about alcohol, other drugs, gambling, and personal skills. All surveys were collected according to the protocol, which guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

Once data collection was completed, the paper surveys were processed by being optically scanned to capture the data in electronic form. Eleven per cent of all surveys were inspected visually to ensure scanning accuracy. The data were then uploaded to Stata 8.2 software. Before analyses commenced, cases were excluded if there were no valid responses for age or sex questions, if respondents claimed that they used a fictitious drug



(andrenochromes), if they reported using 11 or more of 13 illicit drugs 40 or more times during the past year, or if they had missing values for all of the core drug questions. Excluded cases were analyzed to ensure that they were proportionately distributed throughout the sample. After exclusion criteria were applied, the final sample contained 3,915 respondents.

After the sample was finalized, the data were weighted according to a single-stage (school) stratified (by region) cluster sample design with selection proportional to school size. Weight corrections were created to account for differences in official and actual student enrollment, student non-response, and the discrepancy between students who could have been given the opportunity to participate in each region and those given the opportunity to participate in each region. Next, a relative weight was calculated, as a product of the three weight corrections, and applied to the data. For all TAYES 2005 findings, the results are weighted and represent 3,915 completed questionnaires.

The TAYES 2005 results must be interpreted with caution, because of limitations in sampling across Alberta. AADAC was unable to obtain approval to survey Calgary students and secured access to only a limited group of Edmonton high school students. As a result, the findings may not sufficiently represent Alberta students, overall.

## Prevalence of substance use and gambling activity

The primary objective of The Alberta Youth Experience Survey 2005 was to measure alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use and gambling activity among Alberta students in grades 7 through 12. Whereas 12.9% of all students report never using alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs, or participating in gambling activities, 87.1% had used substances and/or gambled in their lifetime.

The following tables provide an overview of Alberta students' use of substances and gambling activities, based on the results of TAYES 2005.

TABLE 1: Percentage of Alberta youth who have not used alcohol, smoked cigarettes, used other drugs and not participated in gambling activities in the last 12 months, by grade

	Overall	Grades 7 - 9	Grades 10 - 12
<b>Percentage of youth who have not used substances</b>			
Alcohol	36.6	61.8	23.1
Smoked cigarettes (past 30 days)	86.5	95.4	81.7
Cannabis (marijuana or hashish)	73.3	87.9	65.5
Other hallucinogens	90.9	96.4	88.4
Ecstasy	93.6	97.3	91.9
Cocaine	95.8	98.3	94.5
Stimulants	96.3	97.1	95.9
Solvents	96.7	94.7	97.8
Glue	97.3	96.0	98.0
Ketamine	97.6	99.3	96.8
Crack	97.8	98.6	97.4
LSD	97.8	98.3	97.6
PCP	97.8	99.0	97.2
Methamphetamines (speed)	98.1	98.5	97.9
Ritalin®	98.1	99.1	97.6
Tranquillizers	98.6	99.1	98.3
Crystal meth	98.9	99.3	98.7
Barbiturates	98.9	98.4	99.1
Rohypnol®	99.0	98.6	99.2
Oxycontin®	99.2	99.6	99.0
Heroin	99.4	99.6	99.4
GHB	99.4	99.7	99.3
Vicodin®	99.6	99.4	99.6



	Overall	Grades 7 - 9	Grades 10 - 12
<b>Percentage of youth who have not participated in gambling activities</b>			
Played cards for money	58.7	70.5	52.3
Played scratch tickets	65.0	66.9	64.1
Bet on sporting events	71.6	75.0	69.5
Played bingo	80.2	76.9	82.0
Played any other lottery	86.5	89.4	85.0
Played VLTs	94.1	94.3	94.0
Played Sport Select	94.8	96.2	94.1
Bet online	95.3	96.5	94.6

Note: Past-30-day smoking includes daily or occasional smoker

TABLE 2: Percentage of past-year youth substance use and gambling activity in Alberta, by grade

	Overall	Grades 7 - 9	Grades 10 - 12
<b>Used alcohol</b>			
Alcohol	63.4	38.2	76.9
<b>Used tobacco</b>			
Smoked cigarettes (past 30 days)	13.5	4.6	18.3
<b>Used cannabis</b>			
Cannabis (marijuana or hashish)	26.7	12.1	34.5
<b>Used other drugs</b>			
Other hallucinogens	9.1	3.6	11.6
Ecstasy	6.4	2.7*	8.1
Cocaine	4.2	1.7*	5.5
Stimulants	3.7	2.9	4.1
Solvents	3.3	5.3	2.2
Glue	2.7	4.0	2.0
Ketamine	2.4	0.7*	3.2
Crack	2.2	1.4*	2.6
LSD	2.2	1.7*	2.4
PCP	2.2	1.0*	2.8
Methamphetamines (speed)	1.9	1.5*	2.1
Ritalin®	1.9	0.9*	2.4
Tranquillizers	1.5	0.9*	1.7
Crystal meth	1.1	0.7*	1.3
Barbiturates	1.1	1.6*	0.9*
Rohypnol®	1.0*	1.3*	0.8*
Oxycontin®	0.8*	#	1.0*
Heroin	0.6*	#	0.7*
GHB	0.6*	#	0.7*
Vicodin®	#	0.6*	#

	Overall	Grades 7 - 9	Grades 10 - 12
<b>Participated in gambling activities</b>			
Played cards for money	41.3	29.5	47.7
Played scratch tickets	35.0	33.1	35.9
Bet on sporting events	28.4	24.6	30.5
Played bingo	19.8	23.1	18.0
Played any other lottery	13.5	10.6	15.0
Played VLTs	5.9	5.7	6.0
Played Sport Select	5.2	3.8	5.9
Bet online	4.7	3.5	5.4

Note: Past-30-day smoking includes daily or occasional smokers.

\* Moderate sampling variability, interpret with caution.

# High sampling variability-although an estimate may be determined from the table, data should be suppressed.

TABLE 3: Percentage of selected past-year substance use, gambling activity, and harmful use or abuse in Alberta, by gender

	Overall	Males	Females
<b>Used alcohol</b>			
Alcohol	63.4	66.0	61.2
<b>Used tobacco</b>			
Smoked cigarettes (past 30 days)	13.5	13.7	13.4
<b>Used cannabis</b>			
Cannabis (marijuana or hashish)	26.7	29.4	24.4
<b>Participated in gambling activities</b>			
1 or more gambling activities	62.6	68.6	57.5
<b>Prevalence of harmful use or abuse</b>			
Alcohol abuse (hazardous or harmful use)	33.2	33.5	32.9
Binge drinking	31.3	32.8	30.0
Gambling abuse (hazardous or problem gambling)	2.4	3.0	1.9

Note: Past-30-day smoking includes daily or occasional smokers.

TABLE 4: Percentage of selected past-year substance use, gambling activity, and harmful use or abuse in Alberta, by region

	Overall	Edmonton	North	South	Central	Calgary
<b>Used alcohol</b>						
Alcohol	63.4	59.5	72.5	50.2	68.2	NA
<b>Used tobacco</b>						
Smoked cigarettes (past 30 days)	13.5	13.8	15.5	15.7	12.2	NA
<b>Used cannabis</b>						
Cannabis (marijuana or hashish)	26.7	24.8	26.0	23.0	30.1	NA



	Overall	Edmonton	North	South	Central	Calgary
<b>Participated in gambling activities</b>						
1 or more gambling activities	62.6	62.1	64.6	53.0	64.4	NA
<b>Prevalence of harmful use or abuse</b>						
Alcohol abuse (hazardous or harmful use)	33.2	27.6	28.9	38.5	40.9	NA
Binge drinking	31.3	28.8	30.8	26.0	35.9	NA
Gambling abuse (hazardous or problem gambling)	2.4	2.7	1.1	2.1	2.5	NA

Note: Past-30-day smoking includes daily or occasional smokers.

TABLE 5: Percentage of past-year substance use and gambling activity in Alberta, by survey year

	2002	2005
<b>Used alcohol</b>		
Alcohol	56.3	63.4
<b>Used tobacco</b>		
Smoked cigarettes*	16.2	13.5
Chewing tobacco or snuff	7.8	NA
<b>Used cannabis</b>		
Cannabis (marijuana or hashish)	27.6	26.7
<b>Used other drugs</b>		
Other hallucinogens	NA	9.1
Ecstasy	NA	6.4
Cocaine	2.9	4.2
Stimulants	4.0	3.7
Solvents	NA	3.3
Glue	NA	2.7
Ketamine	NA	2.4
Crack	2.8	2.2
LSD	NA	2.2
PCP	NA	2.2
Amphetamines	NA	1.9
Ritalin®	NA	1.9
Tranquillizers	2.3	1.5
Crystal meth	NA	1.1
Barbiturates	NA	1.1
Steroids	1.2	NA

	2002	2005
<b>Participated in gambling activities</b>		
Bet online	3.2	4.7
Played cards for money	23.0	41.3
Bet on sporting events	21.1	28.4
Played VLTs	3.3	6.0
Played bingo	9.5	19.8
Played Sport Select	3.7	5.3
Played any other lottery	6.7	13.5
Played scratch tickets	30.8	35.0

\* 2002 results include past-year smoking, whereas 2005 results include past-30-day smoking (including daily and occasional smoking). Therefore, the results are not comparable between years.

TABLE 6: Percentage of selected past-year substance use and gambling activity, by province

	Alcohol	Tobacco	Cannabis	1 or more gambling activities
Alberta	63.4	13.5*	26.7	62.6
Ontario	62.0	14.4	26.5	NA
Nova Scotia	51.7	23.2	36.5	63.0
Quebec	69.0	23.1*	39.1	51.1
Prince Edward Island	49.0	18.0	24.0	60.0
Newfoundland and Labrador (island portion only)	58.0	27.0	35.0	65.0
New Brunswick	53.0	21.0	35.0	58.0
Manitoba	58.8	24.8	39.1	NA

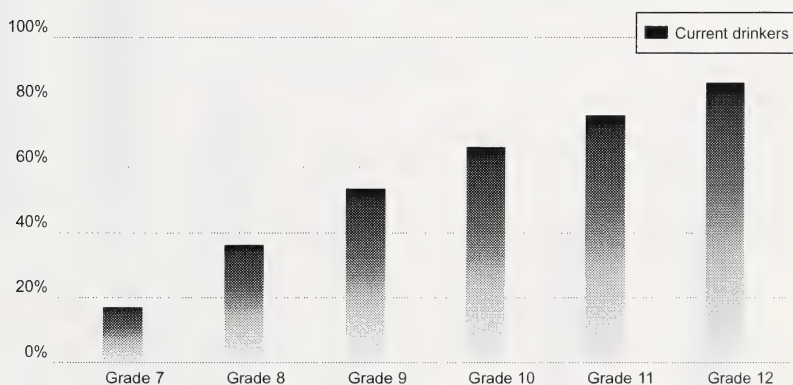
Note: All tobacco results include past-year smokers, with the exception of Alberta and Quebec, which include past-30-day smoking (includes daily or occasional smokers). Results from Alberta and Quebec are not comparable to the results of other provinces.

## Alcohol

### Prevalence of use

- 36.6% of all students are non-drinkers; 63.4% had consumed alcohol in the last 12 months.
  - More junior high students (61.8%) than high school students (23.1%) are non-drinkers.
- Current drinkers (those who drank alcohol in the last 12 months, excluding sips) increase by grade (see Figure 1):
  - 19.1% of Grade 7 students, 36.4% of Grade 8 students, and 52.8% of Grade 9 students are current drinkers.
  - The majority of high school students are current drinkers, including 67.3% of Grade 10 students, 77.8% of Grade 11 students, and 86.0% of Grade 12 students.

FIGURE 1: Percentage of all students who are current drinkers, by grade



Note: Current drinkers are students who consumed alcohol in the last 12 months, excluding sips.

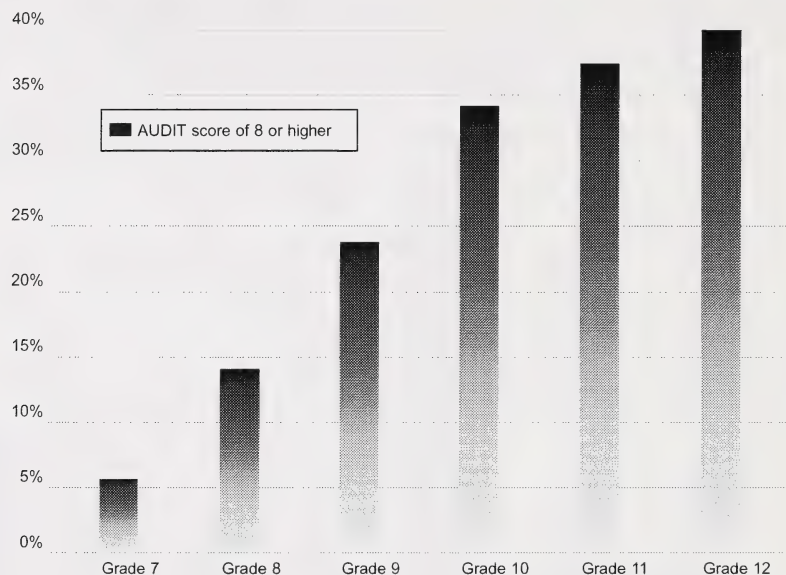
- More males (66.0%) than females (61.2%) drank alcohol in the last 12 months.
- Students in the North (72.5%) and Central (68.2%) regions are more likely to be current drinkers than students in the Edmonton (59.5%) and South (50.2%) regions.
- Since TAYES 2002, the proportion of current drinkers in Alberta increased from 56.3% to 63.4%.
- Alcohol consumption in Alberta (63.4% current drinkers) is surpassed only by Quebec (69.0%) in cross-province comparisons. Other provinces show lower levels of alcohol consumption, with Ontario showing 62.0% of students drinking in the past year, Manitoba 58.8%, Newfoundland 58.0%, New Brunswick 53.0%, Nova Scotia 51.7%, and Prince Edward Island 49.0%.



## Alcohol abuse

- The proportion of students meeting AUDIT<sup>2</sup> criteria for hazardous drinking increases by grade, with 5.9% of Grade 7 students, 14.1% of Grade 8 students, 23.3% of Grade 9 students, 34.1% of Grade 10 students, 37.8% of Grade 11 students, and 39.9% of Grade 12 students meeting or exceeding the criteria for hazardous drinking (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: Percentage of all students meeting AUDIT criteria for hazardous drinking



- 33.2% of all students meet AUDIT criteria for hazardous drinking, with males (33.5%) and females (32.9%) demonstrating similar levels.
- More students in the Central (40.9%) and South (38.5%) regions meet AUDIT criteria for hazardous drinking than students in the North (28.9%) region and Edmonton (27.6%).
- Overall, 31.3% of all students report incidents of binge drinking, with few minimal differences between males and females.
- Binge drinking varies slightly among regions, with students from the Central (35.9%) and North (30.8%) regions reporting higher levels than students from Edmonton (28.8%) and the South (26.0%) region.
- Males (32.8%) and females (30.0%) report similar levels of binge drinking.
- Binge drinking increases significantly by grade, with 3.0% of Grade 7 students, 10.5% of Grade 8 students, 19.4% of Grade 9 students, 35.9% of Grade 10 students, 38.6% of Grade 11 students, and 47.5% of Grade 12 students reporting incidents of binge drinking.

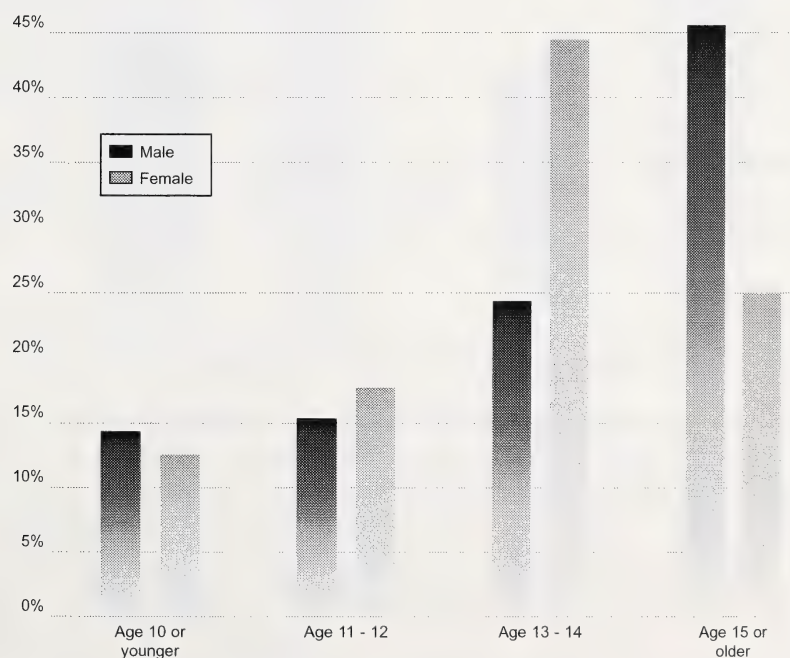
<sup>2</sup> The AUDIT (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test) measures hazardous or harmful drinking patterns, with scores ranging from 0 to 40. A score of 8 or higher identifies hazardous or harmful drinking.

## Tobacco

### Tobacco use behaviour

- 86.5% of all students report not smoking cigarettes (including daily or occasional smoking) in the past 30 days.
- High school students (18.3%) are more likely to report past-30-day smoking than junior high school students (4.6%).
- Males (13.7%) and females (13.4%) report similar levels of past-30-day smoking.
- Students in the South (15.7%) and North (15.5%) regions are more likely to report past-30-day smoking than students in Edmonton (13.8%) and the Central (12.2%) region.
- Males and females demonstrate different patterns of smoking initiation (see Figure 3):
  - Of all females who have ever smoked, most (44.4%) first smoked a whole cigarette between the ages of 13 and 14.
  - Males who have smoked report first smoking a whole cigarette (45.9%) at the age of 15 or older.

FIGURE 3: Age first smoked a whole cigarette among ever smokers, by sex



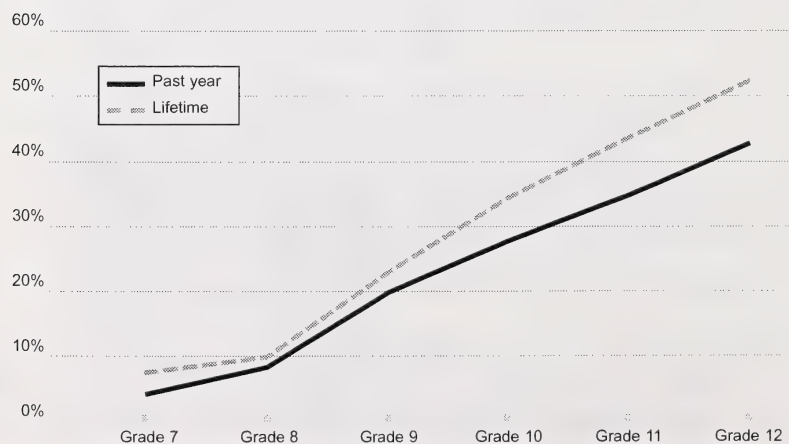
- Quebec, the only other province to report on past-30-day smoking, demonstrates higher levels of past-30-day smoking (23.1%) than Alberta (13.5%).
- 24.8% of all students report that one or more people smoke inside their home every day or almost every day.
- Student exposure to second-hand smoke in vehicles varies by grade, with 25.9% to 31.5% of students in grades 7 through 10 and 42.2% of students in grades 11 through 12 reporting riding in a car during the past seven days with someone who was smoking cigarettes.

## Illicit drugs

### Prevalence of cannabis use

- Overall, 26.7% of students used cannabis in the last 12 months.
- More high school students (34.5%) than junior high school students (12.1%) used cannabis in the last year.
- 73.3% of all students did not use cannabis in the last 12 months.
- More males (29.4%) than females (24.4%) used cannabis in the last 12 months.
- Past-year cannabis use varies by region. In the Central region, 30.1% of students used cannabis in the past year. Lower levels of past-year use were reported in the North region (26.0%), Edmonton (24.8%), and the South region (23.0%).
- Both lifetime and past-year use of cannabis increases with grade (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: Percentage of youth who used cannabis in the past year or in their lifetime, by grade



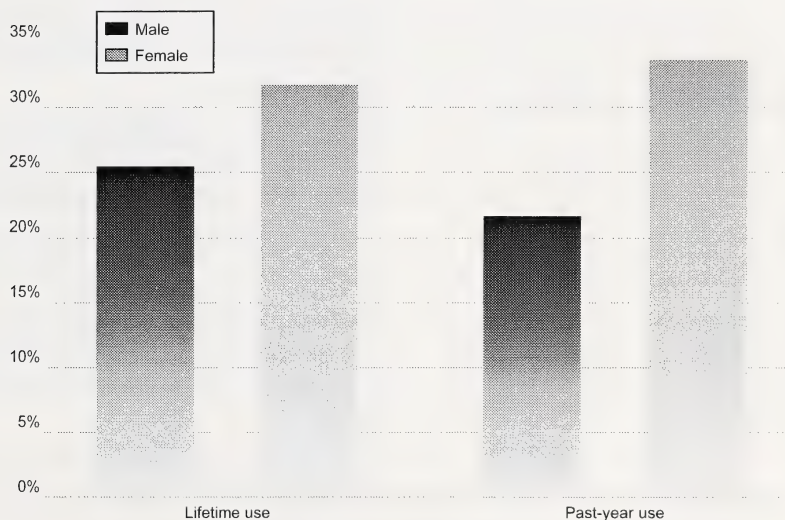


- Past-year use of cannabis in 2005 (26.7%) is similar to levels shown in 2002 (27.6%).
- Alberta levels of past-year cannabis use (26.7%) are lower than in Quebec (39.1%), Manitoba (39.1%), Nova Scotia (36.5%), Newfoundland and Labrador (35.0%), and New Brunswick (35.0%). Only Ontario (26.5%) and Prince Edward Island (24.0%) demonstrate lower levels of cannabis use in the last 12 months.

#### Prevalence of other drug use (excluding cannabis)

- 28.8% of all students report using illicit drugs (excluding cannabis) in their lifetime.
- 25.4% of students report past-year use of illicit drugs.
- More females (31.7%) report ever using illicit drugs than males (25.5%). Females (28.7%) also report higher past-year illicit drug use than males (21.8%) (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5: Percentage of lifetime and past-year use of illicit drugs (excluding cannabis), by gender



- The most commonly used illicit drugs other than cannabis are hallucinogens (including mescaline and psilocybin or magic mushrooms, but excluding LSD or PCP): 9.1% of students report using hallucinogens in the past year, and 9.9% report using in their lifetime.
- Other illicit drugs reportedly most used in the last 12 months include ecstasy (6.4%), cocaine (4.2%), stimulants (3.7%), solvents (3.3%), and glue (2.7%).
  - With the exceptions of solvents and glue, high school students are more likely to have used these illicit drugs in the last 12 months.

- 1.1% of students report using crystal meth in the last 12 months and 1.4% report using it in their lifetime.
- Where comparisons may be made between TAYES 2002 and 2005 results,<sup>3</sup> illicit drug use, for the most part, decreased.
  - The reported use of stimulants, crack, and tranquillizers decreased since 2002, whereas the use of cocaine increased.

## Gambling

### Prevalence of participation

- 37.4% of all students did not participate in gambling activities in the last 12 months.
- In the last year, males (68.6%) were more likely to report that they gambled than females (57.5%).
- Past-year gambling participation is more prevalent among high school students (66.4%) than junior high students (55.6%).
- The most popular gambling activity is playing cards for money (41.3%, overall), with 47.7% of high school students and 29.5% of junior high students reporting participation in this activity in the last 12 months.
- Other prevalent gambling activities in the past year include playing scratch tickets (35.0%), betting on sporting events (28.4%), playing bingo (19.8%), and playing other lotteries (13.5%).
- Fewer students played VLTs (5.9%) or Sport Select (5.2%) or bet online (4.7%).
- More high school students participated in selected gambling activities in the last 12 months, with the exception of playing bingo. 18.0% of high school students played bingo, versus 23.1% of junior high students.
- More students participated in one or more gambling activities in the North (64.6%) and Central (64.4%) regions and Edmonton (62.1%), than in the South (53.0%) region.
- Participation in all selected gambling activities increased since 2002.
  - The greatest increase (18.3%) in the participation is playing cards for money, with 23.0% of students in 2002 and 41.3% of students in 2005 reporting past-year engagement in this activity.
  - Other gambling activities that demonstrate substantially increased past-year participation include playing bingo (10.3% increase), betting on sporting events (7.3% increase), and playing other lotteries (6.8% increase).

<sup>3</sup> Between TAYES 2002 and 2005, many drug categories were modified or omitted, thus limiting the comparability of the results.

- The proportion of students participating in at least one gambling activity is highest in Newfoundland and Labrador (65.0%) and Nova Scotia (63.0%), followed by Alberta (62.6%), Prince Edward Island (60.0%), New Brunswick (58.0%), and Quebec (51.1%).

### Problem gambling

- Overall, 2.4% of students present signs of gambling abuse (hazardous or problem gambling), according to SOGS-RA<sup>4</sup> criteria (see Table 7).
- Males (3.0%) are more likely than females (1.9%) to demonstrate hazardous or problem gambling behaviour.
- Students in Edmonton (2.7%) and the Central (2.5%) region show higher than average levels of hazardous or problem gambling; those in the South (2.1%) and North (1.1%) regions showed lower levels of hazardous or problem gambling.
- Overall, 5.9% of all students demonstrate at-risk gambling, a classification more prevalent among high school (6.3%) than junior high school (5.2%) students.

TABLE 7: Percentage of Alberta youth classified at different levels of hazardous or problem gambling, by grade

	Overall	Grades 7 - 9	Grades 10 - 12
Non-problem gamblers (gamble with 0 or 1 of 12 possible problems reported)	91.6	92.5	91.2
At-risk gamblers (gamble frequently with 1 problem OR gamble less frequently with 2 or more problems)	5.9	5.2	6.3
Problem gamblers— (gamble daily OR gamble weekly with 2 or more problems)	2.4	2.3*	2.5

\*Moderate sampling variability, interpret with caution.

<sup>4</sup> The South Oaks Gambling Screen—Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA) is a 12-item questionnaire that measures gambling frequency and associated behaviour, with each item scoring one point, to a maximum of 12. A score of zero or one indicates that the respondent does not have a gambling problem, a score of two or three defines the respondent as an at-risk gambler, and a score of 4 or higher denotes problem gambling.



## Attitudes, perceptions, and social networks

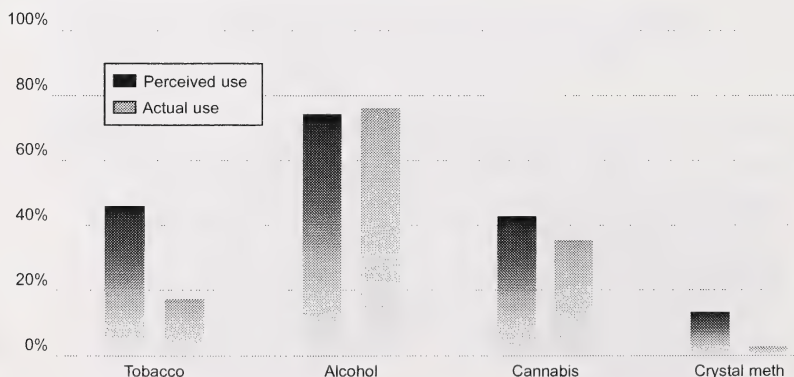
The second objective of The Alberta Youth Experience Survey 2005 was to examine student attitudes, perceptions, and social networks and determine their relationships with alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use and gambling behaviour. Students were asked questions about their perceptions of use and access to substances and gambling activities, the behaviour of members of their social networks, the level of parental monitoring they received, their perceptions of their academic performance and school enjoyment, and their attendance at raves and outdoor parties.

### Perceptions of use and access to substances and gambling activities

With the exception of alcohol, most high school students perceive substance use among their peers to be higher than actual reported use (see Figure 6).

- 76.9% of students in grades 10 through 12 report using alcohol in the past 12 months, but they believe that only 74.3% of their peers consumed alcohol in the past year.
- 18.3% of all high school students used tobacco in the past 30 days, but students in grades 10 through 12 believed that 46.3% of their peers used tobacco in the past 30 days.
- Although 34.5% of students in grades 10 through 12 used cannabis in the last 12 months, high school students believed that 44.5% of their peers used cannabis during the same time period.
- Only 1.3% of high school students used crystal meth in the past year, but students in grades 10 through 12 believed that 11.6% of their peers used crystal meth in the past year.

FIGURE 6: High school students' perceptions of substance use among peers compared to actual use

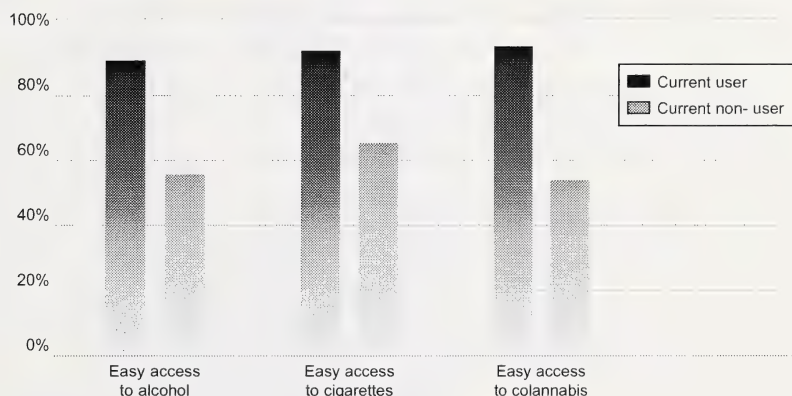


Note: Current use of tobacco refers to reported smoking in the last 30 days; all other current use percentages refer to reported past-12-month use.

Current users are more likely than non-users to perceive access to alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis to be easy or very easy (see Figure 7).

- 90.9% of current drinkers believe that it is easy or very easy to obtain alcohol, versus 54.9% of current non-drinkers.
- 93.5% of past-30-day smokers believe that it is easy or very easy to obtain cigarettes, versus 67.8% students who have not smoked in the past 30 days.
- 94.2% of current cannabis users believe that it is easy or very easy to obtain cannabis, versus 53.6% of current non-users of cannabis.

FIGURE 7: Percentage of users and non-users who perceive access to three substances to be easy or very easy



Note: Only students in grades 10 through 12 responded to the perceived use questions. Current use of tobacco refers to reported smoking in the last 30 days; all other current use percentages refer to reported past-12-month use.

## Social networks

Students were asked about alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use among four members of their social network, and the ease of acquiring the substances from the four members, based on member use status.

- Overall, students report that it is easier to obtain substances from members of their social network who use those substances. For example, although 76.3% of students claim it is easier to obtain cigarettes from their closest friend if he or she smokes, only 7.1% of respondents perceive it to be easy to obtain cigarettes from their closest friend who does not smoke (see Table 8).
- Students find it easier to obtain substances from their two closest friends, rather than their parents, regardless of member use status, with the exception of alcohol.
- Students believe that it is easier to get alcohol from their non-using mothers (5.9%) and fathers (6.5%), than their non-using friends (closest friend number 1=5.1% and closest friend number 2=2.0%).

- When students' closest friends use illicit drugs, they perceive it would be easy to get illicit drugs from their closest friends (closest friend number 1=58.8% and closest friend number 2=62.2%), whereas a smaller portion of students believe it would be easy to get illicit drugs from their parents (mothers=27.0% and fathers=16.6%) when their mothers and fathers are illicit drug users.

TABLE 8: Percentage of students reporting that it would be easy or very easy to get each substance from four social network members, by member use status

	Mother	Father	Closest friend No. 1	Closest friend No. 2
<b>It would be easy to get cigarettes from this person</b>				
Total TAYES sample	5.6	6.7	17.4	17.3
If member smokes*	18.9	19.0	76.3	57.0
If member does not smoke*	1.6	2.2	7.1	8.3
<b>It would be easy to get alcohol from this person</b>				
Total TAYES sample	18.1	22.0	39.1	34.0
If member drinks	26.6	27.6	64.2	61.9
If member does not drink	5.9	6.5	5.1	2.0
<b>It would be easy to get illicit drugs from this person</b>				
Total TAYES sample	1.0	2.3	13.3	15.0
If member uses illicit drugs	27.0*	16.6	58.8	62.2
If member does not use illicit drugs #		0.7*	3.8	2.1

Note: Member smoking status refers to past-30-day smoking (including occasional or daily smoking).

All other substance use refers to past-year use.

\* Moderate sampling variability, interpret with caution.

# High sampling variability. Although an estimate may be determined from the table, data should be suppressed.

## Parental monitoring

- Overall, most students (87.3%) report that their parents know where they are after school most of the time or always (see Table 9).
  - Of all substance users, current drinkers report the highest levels of parental supervision, with 82.2% reporting that their parents know where they are after school most of the time or always.
  - Past-30-day smokers report the lowest levels of parental supervision, as 39.3% report that their parents know where they are after school sometimes, rarely, or never.
  - Cannabis (71.1%) and illicit drug users (65.6%) report lower than average levels of parental supervision, with fewer parents knowing where they are after school most of the time or always.



- Most students (81.5%) report that when they go out at night, their parents know who they are with most of the time or always.
  - Of all substance users, current drinkers report the highest levels of parental supervision, with 73.8% reporting that when they go out at night, their parents know who they are with most of the time or always.
  - Past-30-day smokers report the lowest levels of parental supervision, as 42.6% report that their parents sometimes, rarely, or never know who they are with when they go out at night.
  - Cannabis (61.8%) and illicit drug users (58.2%) report lower than average levels of parental supervision, with fewer parents knowing who they are with when they go out at night most of the time or always.
- A majority of parents (79.2%) know where students are when they go out at night most of the time or always.
  - Of all substance users, current drinkers report the highest levels of parental supervision, with 70.7% reporting that when they go out at night, their parents know where they are most of the time or always.
  - Illicit drug users report the lowest levels of parental supervision: 45.5% report that their parents sometimes, rarely, or never know where they are when they go out at night.
  - Both cannabis (59.1%) and past-30-day smokers (55.0%) report lower than average levels of parental supervision, with fewer parents knowing where they are when they go out at night most of the time or always.
- Over half (59.2%) of students report that when they go out on weekend nights, they have to be home by a set time most of the time or always.
  - Of all substance users, current drinkers report the highest levels of parental supervision, with 52.4% reporting that when they go out on weekend nights, they have to be home by a set time most of the time or always.
  - Current cannabis users (52.5%), current illicit drug users (52.4%), and past-30-day smokers (50.6%) report lower levels of parental supervision, with more than half stating that when they go out on weekend nights, they sometimes, rarely, or never have to be home by a set time.

TABLE 9: Percentage of all students and current users who report low and high levels of parental monitoring

	Never/rarely/sometimes	Most of the time/always
<b>My parents know where I am after school.</b>		
Overall	12.7	87.3
Current drinkers	17.8	82.2
Current smokers	39.3	60.7
Current cannabis users	28.9	71.1
Current illicit drug users	34.4	65.6
<b>When I go out at night my parents know who I am with.</b>		
Overall	18.5	81.5
Current drinkers	26.2	73.8
Current smokers	42.6	57.4
Current cannabis users	38.2	61.8
Current illicit drug users	41.8	58.2
<b>When I go out at night, my parents know where I am.</b>		
Overall	20.8	79.2
Current drinkers	29.4	70.7
Current smokers	45.0	55.0
Current cannabis users	41.0	59.1
Current illicit drug users	45.5	54.5
<b>When I go out on weekend nights, I have to be home by a set time.</b>		
Overall	40.8	59.2
Current drinkers	47.6	52.4
Current smokers	50.6	49.4
Current cannabis users	52.5	47.5
Current illicit drug users	52.4	47.7

Note: With the exception of smokers, all current substance use groups include members who used within the last 12 months. Current smokers denote students who used tobacco within the past 30 days (including occasional or daily smoking).

## Academic performance and school enjoyment

Overall, 3.9% of students perceive their academic performance to be below average, 62.9% consider their performance to be average, and 33.2% perceive their performance to be above average (see Table 10).

- Of students in all user and non-user groups, non-drinkers are most likely (37.9%) to consider their academic performance to be above average.
- More cannabis users (8.8%) consider their academic performance to be below average than students in all other user and non-user groups.
- Of all user and non-user groups, current users of illicit drugs (excluding cannabis) are least likely (20.3%) to perceive their academic performance to be above average.

- In general, non-user groups are more likely to perceive their academic performance to be above average: 33.2% of students overall perceive their academic performance to be above average versus 37.9% of those who do not use alcohol, 35.4% of non-users of tobacco, 37.3% of non-users of cannabis, and 35.9% of gamblers. The exception to this are those who report not using illicit drugs (other than cannabis), 32.4% of whom perceive their academic performance to be above average.
- With the exception of current illicit drug non-users (32.4%), more other non-user groups, including alcohol (37.9%), tobacco (35.4%), cannabis (37.3%), and gambling (35.9%), perceive their academic performance to be above average than students overall (33.2%).

TABLE 10: Perceived grades relative to peers among current users and non-users of cigarettes, alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs, and current gamblers and non-gamblers

	Below average	Average	Above average
Total	3.9	62.9	33.2
Current smokers	5.5*	71.9	22.6
Current non-smokers	3.7	60.9	35.4
Current drinkers	4.6	65.0	30.4
Current non-drinkers	2.7	59.4	37.9
Current cannabis users	8.8	69.4	21.9
Current cannabis non-users	2.1	60.6	37.3
Current other drug users	6.6	73.1	20.3
Current other drug non-users	3.6	64.0	32.4
Current gamblers	4.6	64.1	31.4
Current non-gamblers	2.9	61.2	35.9

Note: Below Average = "far below average" or "below average." Average = "slightly below average," "average," or "slightly above average." Above average = "above average" or "far above average." With the exception of smoking, all current substance use groups include members who used within the last 12 months. Current smokers denote students who used tobacco within the past 30 days (including occasional or daily smoking).

\*Moderate sampling variability, interpret with caution.

- Of all students, 27.7% like school very much or quite a lot, 50.9% like school to some degree, and 21.4% do not like school very much or do not like it at all (see Table 11).
  - School enjoyment is highest among current non-drinkers, with 37.8% stating that they like school very much or quite a lot.
  - Of all user groups, fewer current cannabis users (19.2%) state that they like school very much or quite a lot than any other user or non-user group.
  - Current illicit drug (excluding cannabis) users (35.2%) are most likely to state that they do not like school very much or do not like it at all.
  - Current non-users are more likely to state that they like school very much or quite a lot than users across all substance use and gambling activity groups.



- Current users are more likely to state that they do not like school very much or not at all than non-users across all substance use and gambling activity groups.

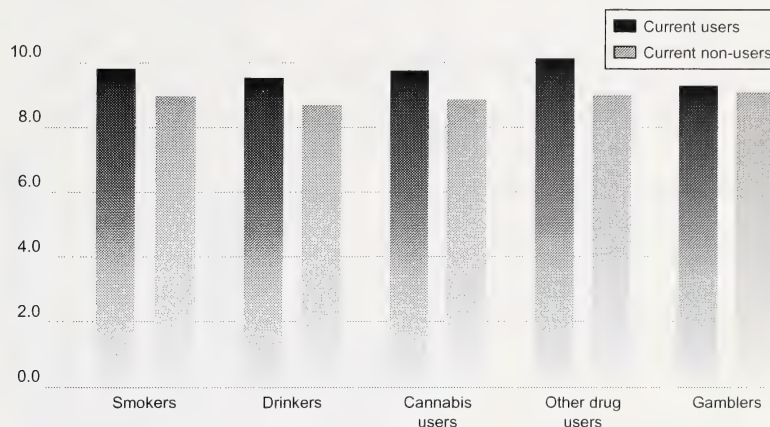
TABLE 11: School enjoyment among current users and non-users of cigarettes, alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs, and current gamblers and non-gamblers

	Like school very much/ quite a lot	Like school to some degree	Don't like school very much/ don't like it at all
Total	27.7	50.9	21.4
Current smokers	27.0	43.0	30.1
Current non-smokers	27.9	51.9	20.2
Current drinkers	21.9	52.1	26.0
Current non-drinkers	37.8	48.7	13.6
Current cannabis users	19.2	49.3	31.5
Current cannabis non-users	30.8	51.5	17.7
Current other drug users	21.1	43.6	35.2
Current other drug non-users	24.9	53.1	22.0
Current gamblers	24.2	52.1	23.7
Current non-gamblers	33.1	49.3	17.7

Note: With the exception of smoking, all current substance use groups include members who used within the last 12 months. Current smokers denote students who used tobacco within the past 30 days (including occasional or daily smoking).

- Five questions measuring perceived safety, closeness to people at school, feeling a part of the school, perceived excellence of teachers, and perceived challenge of classes were asked to measure the level of connectedness students feel with their school. Overall, students in all user groups showed higher levels of disengagement than students in non-user groups (see Figure 8).
  - Current illicit drug (excluding cannabis) users showed the highest level of disengagement, with an average disengagement score of 10.2.
- Other current users also showed high disengagement scores, with past-30-day smokers (9.9), current cannabis users (9.8), current drinkers (9.4), and current gamblers (9.2) also demonstrating higher disengagement scores than all non-user groups.
- Non-current drinkers showed the lowest school disengagement scores, with an average score of 8.8.

FIGURE 8: Mean school disengagement scores among all students

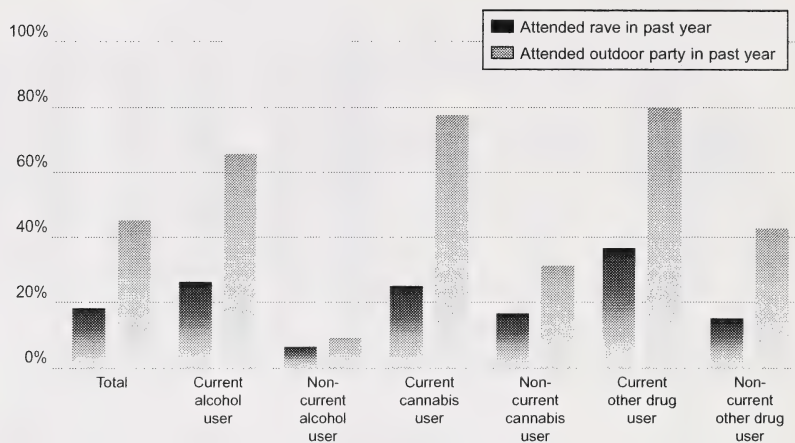


Note: Scores can range from 5 to 20, with 20 indicating greater disengagement. Current smokers refers to students who reported smoking in the last 30 days. All other current use percentages refer to reported past-12-month use.

### Attendance at raves and outdoor parties

- Overall, more students attended outdoor parties (44.2%) than raves (18.6%) in the past year.
- Current alcohol users were more likely to attend raves (25.3%) and outdoor parties (64.9%) than non-current alcohol users (raves= 6.7% and outdoor parties=8.4%) (see Figure 9).
- Current cannabis users were more likely to attend raves (24.8%) than non-current cannabis users (16.3%). Current users were also more likely to attend outdoor parties (78.7%) than non-current cannabis users (31.7%).
- Current illicit drug (excluding cannabis) users were more likely to attend raves (36.8%) than non-users (16.5%). Current illicit drug users were also more likely to attend outdoor parties (79.9%) than non-current illicit drug users (41.9%).
- Current illicit drug users were more likely to attend outdoor parties (79.9%) and raves (36.8%) than all other user and non-user groups.

FIGURE 9: Past-year attendance at raves and outdoor parties among current alcohol, cannabis, and other drug users and non-users





## Conclusion

The Alberta Youth Experience Survey 2005 provides information about alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use and gambling behaviour among Alberta youth. The results reveal differences in use and behaviour patterns by gender, grade, and regional groups. TAYES 2005 also identifies the prevalence of harmful use of substances and gambling.

To better understand the environment in which substance use and gambling behaviour occur, TAYES 2005 also examines the contextual elements of users' and non-users' lives. By exploring student perceptions, access to substances and gambling, social networks and activities, school achievement and connectedness, and parental relationships, the survey explores associations between substance use and gambling behaviour and the situational factors influencing Alberta youth.

TAYES 2005 findings are a useful resource when evaluating information, prevention, and treatment policies and programs related to adolescent substance use and gambling in Alberta. The results also provide timely and detailed data, which provide an accurate description of substance use and gambling activity among Alberta youth.

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## Participating School Jurisdictions

Aspen View Regional Division No. 19

Black Gold Regional Division No. 18

Canadian Rockies Regional Division No. 12

East Central Alberta Catholic Separate Schools Regional Division No. 16

Edmonton School District No. 7

Foothills School Division No. 38

Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional Division No. 16

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